



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**
Sixty-sixth session

Summary record of the 1476th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 16 February 2017, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Leinarte

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (continued)

Sixth periodic report of Jordan (CEDAW/C/JOR/6; CEDAW/C/JOR/Q/6 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Jordan took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Ms. Majali** (Jordan), introducing the sixth periodic report of Jordan (CEDAW/C/JOR/6), said that the report had been drafted by the Jordanian National Commission for Women, which had held a number of workshops and worked closely with all relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations, before submitting it to the authorities. The report had provided an opportunity for a national discussion and a thorough evaluation of the progress made during the reporting period on implementing the Convention and made it possible to identify areas where there was room for improvement. However, the insecurity and humanitarian crises that dominated the region, particularly in neighbouring countries such as the Syrian Arab Republic, presented significant challenges to maintaining the pace of progress. Almost seven years had passed since the start of the Syrian crisis and there seemed to be no end in sight. As a direct result, Jordan, one of the world's most water scarce countries, was now also home to one of the world's largest refugee populations. Some 1.4 million Syrian refugees had sought refuge in Jordan, the majority of whom were women and school-age children. In addition, Jordan, already host to a significant proportion of the world's Palestinian refugees, had welcomed an additional 16,000 Palestinian refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic and had opened its doors to refugees from other countries affected by conflict in the region, such as Iraq and Yemen. Such an influx was a heavy burden which, coupled with other factors, was affecting the development and provision of basic services. Insecurity was also a major issue: a large armed presence had had to be deployed along the country's border in order to ward off the constant threat of terrorist attack and transnational crime. In fact, in June 2016, six border guards had been killed and 14 injured following a terrorist incident.
3. Despite the enormity of the regional pressures it faced, the Government had managed to ensure that its programme of development and reform stayed on track. A high priority was given to promoting and protecting human rights, in particular women's rights, and Jordan was committed to meeting its international commitments, including those made under the Convention and Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.
4. There had been several important legislative and constitutional developments in recent years aimed at strengthening gender equality and women's empowerment. By way of example, amendments to the laws on retirement from the military and social security had put women on an equal footing with men when it came to pension entitlements. The family was the cornerstone of society, as was reflected in the legal protections afforded to mothers, children and older persons. The legal provision preventing a woman from travelling without the consent of her husband had been repealed, and a law on the establishment of family reconciliation and mediation offices had been introduced with a view to helping families to settle their disputes amicably. Eight such offices had already been set up under the sharia courts around the country and there were plans for more offices to be opened to cover all parts of the country.
5. A bill on domestic violence that sought to safeguard rights and protect victims was under consideration. Provision had been made under the bill for various penalties for offenders, including non-custodial penalties such as community service, and rehabilitation services for both victims and perpetrators. Similarly, in response to campaigns by women's

rights organizations, certain legislative amendments had been introduced to ensure that women's shelters were able to provide effective services to support and protect women victims of violence, including those subjected to sexual violence or at risk of so-called honour killings.

6. Efforts had been made to encourage more women to take up positions of economic leadership and ensure greater transparency and fairness in the recruitment process. Gender equality had also been integrated into many national plans of action, and an emphasis had been placed on ensuring that data related to the 2017 budget was disaggregated by gender. A social and economic plan for 2015 had also contained a target to promote the economic and social empowerment of women. Moreover, national plans and strategies related to women had been harmonized with the Sustainable Development Goals, paving the way for women to play an important part in the economy and to gain access to the labour market without discrimination.

7. There had been changes to the law that had allowed for greater political representation of women in political and public life. Indeed, for the first time in Jordanian history, 20 women had won parliamentary seats at the ballot box, which meant that women now represented 15 per cent of members of Parliament. Moreover, 47 out of 350 governorate council seats had been reserved for women candidates; a ministerial committee on gender equality and women's empowerment had been formed; and there were now two women Government ministers. State departments with low women's representation had been instructed to conduct analyses to identify the root causes and to develop programmes to improve the gender balance. The Government had adopted a national human rights plan that contained specific goals aimed at enabling women to exercise their rights in respect of access to justice and equal opportunities. To that end, work was under way to review and verify the application of all relevant legislation with a view to proposing the necessary amendments.

8. Regarding the judiciary, women's representation had increased from 6 per cent in 2008 to 18 per cent in 2014. There were currently 189 women judges in Jordan, and women were increasingly occupying high-level positions in the justice system. In the area of diplomacy, women accounted for 11 per cent of ambassadors and 18 per cent of diplomatic officials, many of whom held middle management posts.

Articles 1 to 6

9. **Ms. Haidar** said that she wished to commend the State party on the introduction of various laws and amendments aimed at promoting women's rights and the fact that the National Centre for Human Rights had been granted full independence in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles) and had received increased budgetary resources. That said, she wished to draw the delegation's attention to the recommendations made by the Committee in its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/JOR/CO/5), namely to introduce comprehensive non-discrimination legislation and amend article 6 of the Constitution on guarantees of equality to include a specific reference to sex and gender. In the absence of the implementation of those recommendations, the State party was not fully meeting its obligations under articles 1 and 2 of the Convention. In fact, according to the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index, the gender pay gap in Jordan had significantly widened in recent years, with the country ranking 134 out of 144 countries in 2016. Noting that the State party continued to maintain its reservations to articles 9 (2) and 16 of the Convention, she called on it to consider the example of other Islamic countries that had found ways to withdraw theirs.

10. Acknowledging the part played by Jordan in welcoming refugees and asylum seekers, she said that she would be interested to hear the delegation's comments on reports

that Palestinian women refugees fleeing the Syrian Arab Republic were treated differently from Syrian women refugees, in particular that they were living in centres where the full range of basic services were lacking and that they were subjected to forced repatriation. Any information on specific measures taken in relation to the thousands of Palestinian refugees in the country would also be welcome. She wondered whether the State party's national plan to implement United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security had been adopted and how involved civil society organizations were likely to be in its implementation. She would be interested to hear more about how the Government intended to carry out the resolution.

11. **Mr. Tawalbeh** (Jordan) said that, in spite of the burden of coping with massive influxes of refugees and asylum seekers from the Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan had spared no effort in ensuring that they had access to critical services, such as health care, shelter, education and rehabilitation, without any discrimination. Moreover, Jordan had been the first country in the world to provide refugees with access to legal aid. Legal assistance offices had been set up in refugee camps and host communities and offered services that were equal to those enjoyed by Jordanian citizens. As to Palestinian women refugees, while it was possible that instances of discrimination might have occurred, such cases were rare and were certainly not part of any official policy. The Government was doing all it could to provide refugee women with access to comprehensive services irrespective of their nationality, country of origin or other factors.

12. **Ms. Nims** (Jordan) said that it was important to highlight the major role played by civil society organizations in furthering the promotion and protection of women's rights and ending discrimination against women in Jordan. In conjunction with civil society, the Jordanian National Commission for Women was working tirelessly to encourage the parliament to adopt more women-friendly legislation and to repeal discriminatory laws.

13. Besides the regional challenges already described, traditional cultural patterns had also contributed to the slow progress made in Jordan over the past four years on the advancement of women. That being said, various plans aimed at promoting women's rights and protecting women refugees from gender-based violence had been approved. For example, in respect of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), a number of plans had been adopted with the aim of promoting women's roles in peacekeeping, peace negotiations and the military. Moreover, as part of efforts to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the Commission was working closely with civil society organizations on allocating the funding provided by the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action.

14. **Ms. Majali** (Jordan) said that Jordan had a long history of opening its doors to refugees, in particular Palestinian refugees, to whom it awarded citizenship when other countries had not even granted them the right to work. Jordan did not discriminate against refugees. Services were provided to them by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and by Jordanian public institutions, and the Government had bridged the UNRWA funding gap, providing up to 1 billion Jordanian dinars to ensure the uninterrupted provision of health, social and other basic services. In that regard, the Government of Jordan called on the international community to increase its financial support to UNRWA, since it was in dire need of funding.

15. As to the country's reservations to articles 9 (2) and 16 of the Convention, there were no plans to withdraw them for the time being. Furthermore, in the light of the fact that the Constitution already provided for the full range of political and legal protections and made no distinction between women and men, additional non-discrimination legislation was neither required nor envisaged at the current time.

16. **Ms. Haidar** said that, while the State party was to be commended for its adoption of a number of complaints mechanisms, she wished to know what measures had been taken to ensure access to justice not just in the capital but in all governorates, whether the delegation could provide more accurate statistical data on access to justice, whether there were human rights branch offices nationwide and whether training activities for the judiciary and the police were being undertaken throughout the country.

17. **Ms. Patten**, noting that many of the Committee's previous recommendations had yet to be implemented in part due to the unique challenges affecting the State party, said that she wondered whether the Government would consider adopting a national plan of action to implement the Committee's forthcoming recommendations. That approach had been used by other States parties to good effect.

18. She noted with satisfaction that the State party had endorsed the recommendations set out in the global study on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), entitled *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*, and wished to know to what extent the Government was ensuring that sufficient funding would be allocated not only for the implementation of its national plan to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) but also for civil society and women's rights organizations working in that field. Lastly, the State party's reservations to articles 9 (2) and 16 of the Convention were no impediment to its ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention. Moreover, acceding to the Optional Protocol would be a clear demonstration of the Government's commitment to promoting gender equality.

19. **Ms. Gabr**, referring to the Committee's previous concluding observations, said that she wished to know whether the State party had looked to the experiences and best practices of other countries in the region and members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation with a view to reviewing and evaluating its laws to better meet its obligations under the Convention.

20. **Ms. Nims** (Jordan) said that her Government and the relevant stakeholders were working together to finalize the national plan to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and that the funding required was being negotiated. Jordan had an established peacekeeping tradition and had played a leading role in ensuring women's involvement in that field. In that connection, the Jordanian National Commission for Women worked in cooperation with the Jordanian security forces to assess women's representation in the military, increase women's participation in efforts to promote peace and security and ensure that Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) was implemented. The importance of civil society organizations' involvement in that area could not be underestimated.

21. **Mr. Tawalbeh** (Jordan) said that the Government was committed to guaranteeing access to justice for all and that there was no discrimination on the grounds of age or gender. Although the influx of refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic had presented a number of challenges, the country had successfully tackled many of the issues facing it, and it was hoped that further progress could be made over time. A bill on establishing a national human rights institution was currently before the parliament. Once approved, there were plans to open branches of that institution nationwide to allow citizens to gain access to justice without being forced to travel to Amman. The National Centre for Human Rights had also adopted other positive measures, such as the establishment of liaison units in each governorate.

22. The concluding observations of the Committee were taken very seriously by the Government. The national human rights plan, for example, incorporated the recommendations of a number of United Nations treaty bodies, with particular attention being paid to those of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Lastly, there were no immediate plans to ratify the Optional Protocol, since Jordan already

had a comprehensive legal system in place that ensured full respect for the broad range of human rights and for women's issues.

23. **Ms. Majali (Jordan)**, responding to a question raised by Ms. Patten, said that various national mechanisms met regularly to discuss follow-up to the issues raised and recommendations made by the United Nations treaty bodies. In fact, the national human rights plan had been formulated directly on the basis of such discussions. One of the pillars of that plan was the protection and promotion of women's rights, gender equality and equal opportunities through legislative amendments aimed at boosting women's participation in public and private life and protecting their role in the family and society. Plans, programmes and institutions underwent an assessment with a view to ensuring that they were in full compliance with the Convention and other international treaties and that all public authorities upheld women's rights.

24. **Ms. Nadaraja**, referring to the Committee's previous concluding observations, in which it had recommended that the State party should strengthen the Jordanian National Commission for Women, said that she wished to know whether the Government had now provided the Commission with the human, financial and technical resources required to fulfil its remit throughout the State party, whether there were any plans to provide the Commission with further support, strengthen its authority and perhaps even grant it direct executive powers and what concrete steps were being taken to ensure that its work covered disadvantaged groups of women, including women refugees and women with disabilities. She would also welcome clarification on the role played by the Commission in the implementation of the National Strategy for Women for the period 2013-2017, which was now in the process of being updated to include Sustainable Development Goal 5. She would welcome information on whether the updated Strategy would include a more results-orientated approach, incorporating indicators, benchmarks, timelines and monitoring mechanisms. Additional information on the mandate of the women's liaison and empowerment unit of the All Jordan Youth Commission established under the King Abdullah II Fund for Development would also be appreciated.

25. **Ms. Acosta Vargas** said that she would be interested to hear about the State party's position on the use of temporary special measures, which were helpful in changing deep-rooted discriminatory social attitudes and reducing gender inequality. She wondered whether the Government was considering the use of such measures to ensure that women had greater access to cultural, economic and political life and occupied positions of leadership in Jordan.

26. **Ms. Nims (Jordan)** said that the funding made available to the Jordanian National Commission for Women had been increased in 2016 and, for the first time, now exceeded US\$ 1 million. It neither had nor sought to have executive powers and worked instead to shape public opinion and raise awareness of discrimination against women. It cooperated with the Government to develop a strategy for the implementation of initiatives relating to women's issues. The strategy was based on an evaluation of objectives set for the advancement of women's rights at the international level, including the Millennium Development Goals and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. To address the shortfalls that had been identified, 17 sectoral committees had been set up to address specific areas of concern, and civil society had been mobilized. The National Commission served to ensure coordination and avoid duplicating efforts. For each objective, development indicators were devised to enable effective monitoring. Progress had been made, and cooperation with United Nations entities, in particular those focused on women's empowerment, would continue. The objectives for the advancement of women's rights would be discussed at a workshop involving civil society organizations in March 2017.

27. The Sustainable Development Goals represented a further opportunity for progress. In addition, measures had been taken to improve the participation of women in politics. In

the workplace, approximately 500 Jordanian women occupying middle management positions had been given training to increase their chances of obtaining decision-making positions. It was important to adopt a cross-sectoral approach to address cultural attitudes regarding gender roles. Jordanian women had joined the labour market in the 1950s, but cultural attitudes concerning the role of women in the family had not changed. For that reason, efforts were being made to create a supportive environment for women in the workplace.

28. **Ms. Haidar** asked whether the Jordanian National Commission for Women would not be more effective if it had executive powers.

29. **Ms. Nims (Jordan)** said that, since its establishment, the objective of the Jordanian National Commission for Women had been to influence policymaking. While there had previously been attempts to establish a ministry for women, and consideration had been given to the possibility of seeking executive powers, it was the view of the board of the National Commission that it was preferable for it to remain semi-independent, as such a position made it possible to challenge the Government and support civil society. Ultimately, the outcome of its initiatives depended on a range of factors. While the National Commission had attempted to raise the quota of women in the parliament, for example, it had ultimately been unsuccessful. The National Commission aimed to influence both the Government and the legislature. Cooperation with the legislative authorities was essential to achieving favourable outcomes for women's rights.

30. **Ms. Majali (Jordan)** said that executive powers would be of limited use, as issues relating to women's rights intersected with the mandates of various ministries. A dedicated ministry risked undermining the work of the Jordanian National Commission for Women, which, by virtue of its relative independence, was able to exert pressure on the Government and work with a range of ministries. Gender mainstreaming had been implemented for many years in cooperation with the National Commission.

31. It was important to maintain close cooperation with the executive and legislative authorities. Before the adoption of the Decentralization Act, for example, the National Commission, civil society and women's organizations had been pushing for the introduction of a quota for women's representation of 15 per cent. While the parliament had initially decided that there should be no quota at all, it had eventually been possible to achieve a quota of 10 per cent. The Government regularly sought the advice and input of the National Commission.

32. **Ms. Gabr** said that, in the light of several recommendations made in the Committee's concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Jordan, she wished to know what progress had been made in terms of challenging stereotypes concerning the role of women in society and the family and eliminating discriminatory legislative provisions. Were there any plans for the future on that front? While the workshop organized for judges had been a positive step, training should also be organized for the staff of law enforcement agencies and prosecutorial bodies. In addition, it was important for the Government to perform an awareness-raising role.

33. With regard to education, more information on changes to school curricula would be welcome. It was important to ensure that children learned about gender equality both in the family and at school. She wished to know whether the national strategy for women for the period 2013-2017 would be updated or replaced and would be grateful for information on the implementation of general recommendation No. 31 on harmful practices. As for domestic violence, family courts and reconciliation services should be strengthened. Were there real guarantees for women in the reconciliation process? Further information on the Dar al-Wifaq al-Ushari shelter for victims of domestic violence would be appreciated. Were such shelters sufficient in number? Were they well resourced? It would also be helpful to

know whether there were any additional shelters operated by NGOs. Lastly, more information on the protective custody process would be welcome, as it raised a number of concerns with regard to women's safety.

34. **Ms. Rana** said that, while the State party was to be commended for the various measures taken to protect migrant workers, they remained vulnerable to trafficking. Many female domestic workers were subjected to forced labour and faced various hardships, including the confiscation of their identity documents and verbal and physical abuse. Some such workers were unable to return to their home countries owing to pending criminal charges against them or their inability to pay overstay penalties, and they were often unable to benefit from free legal aid. In that connection, she wished to know what steps had been taken to amend the Act to Prevent Trafficking in Persons, ensure the safety of victims of human trafficking, make penalties sufficiently stringent, prosecute, convict and punish offenders with adequate custodial sentences and investigate and punish individuals for withholding workers' passports. Additionally, she would be grateful for more information on plans to ensure the effective operation of shelters for victims of trafficking, including mechanisms for the engagement of civil society.

35. **Ms. Nims** (Jordan) said that gender stereotypes were one of the greatest obstacles to social change and legislative reform. In that regard, it was important to ensure effective coordination with the criminal investigation department. To challenge gender stereotypes, it was necessary to revise school textbooks and curricula, and efforts were already being made to do so. On instruction from the King, a committee had been set up to devise a human resources strategy with a particular focus on the education system, and it was working to revise school curricula. It was also important to reform teacher training. Positive informal practices had already been observed in that regard, and efforts should be made to engage teachers further. All stakeholders had acknowledged the seriousness of the issue. A meeting of civil society organizations had recently been held with a focus on the role of education in challenging stereotypes. Regular meetings were held to engage the Ministry of Education with a view to bringing about change on the ground. It was not easy to change stereotypes, but education was central to efforts to do so.

36. The importance of combating trafficking in persons was widely acknowledged. There was a shelter for victims of trafficking, and three further shelters were planned to provide an alternative to administrative custody. Activities had been organized within the framework of the 16 Days Campaign to Combat Violence Against Women. Their objectives had included promoting legislative reform and identifying strategies for the protection of women and girls who were victims of violence. It had been acknowledged that existing preventive mechanisms were insufficiently robust, and a further objective had been to formulate a national plan to be implemented across the country. Academics, civil society and youth organizations had been involved in the process. Without the support of local communities in bringing pressure to bear on the legislative authorities, it would not be possible to achieve the desired objectives.

37. A counter-trafficking unit had been set up within the Ministry of Interior. Various civil society organizations also worked to protect women victims of trafficking and had supported a number of Asian women. Liaison officers had been appointed at the counter-trafficking unit to facilitate the safe return of victims to their home countries. More than 69 return tickets had been provided, and 157 complaints had been referred to the competent authorities. The Prime Minister had decided that victims of trafficking should receive free health care and, where necessary, be referred to centres for psychological treatment. Other activities had been organized to raise awareness of trafficking in persons, including around 40 lectures at schools and universities and radio and television programmes. There were also plans to protect migrant workers from trafficking in persons.

38. **Mr. Tawalbeh** (Jordan) said that, in terms of activities to raise awareness of women's rights in general, a biweekly television programme and various radio programmes had been broadcast, a number of workshops had been organized and meetings had been held across the country. In line with a decision by the Prime Minister and a recommendation by the Government coordinator for human rights, it had been decided that the process of legislative reform should be accelerated. There would be an implementation mechanism for the national human rights plan to ensure compliance with international obligations. The Government was pushing for further legislative reform, but its role was to enforce rather than to enact legislation. Serious consideration had been given to the enactment of legislation on domestic violence, and the matter was now in the hands of the legislative authorities.

39. Training courses were organized for law enforcement agencies as well as the judiciary, and there were plans to organize further courses. Training would be provided for all bodies involved in the promotion and protection of human rights and for public service providers.

40. With regard to domestic violence, offices had been set up to resolve domestic disputes, though more were needed across the country. Mechanisms had been put in place to enable women whose rights had been violated in the process to file complaints. Women could influence the selection of arbitrators, and oversight bodies ensured the full independence of the process. The confidentiality of all information used in the process was guaranteed. Another body provided women with information on their right to appeal settlement decisions. The new law on domestic violence would protect women from pressure and fully guarantee their rights. There was a specialized dispute settlement court. Both parties had to agree to any settlement reached and the court could annul settlements, if necessary.

41. Protective custody served a useful purpose in reducing the prevalence of crime. Although the provisions of the Crime Prevention Act were sometimes applied incorrectly, various measures had been taken to remedy the situation. Victims sometimes needed protection from their relatives. For that reason, a centre had been opened in Irbid, as well as other centres, to provide an alternative to protective custody. Further steps would be taken to raise awareness of the plight of victims.

42. **Ms. Gabr** asked what measures had been taken in response to the recent increase in the number of so-called honour crimes committed in the State party and whether there were plans to repeal those provisions of the Penal Code that allowed perpetrators of such crimes to receive lesser sentences.

43. **Ms. Haidar** said that, according to a recent report, significant percentages of women aged 15-49 years who had been married had experienced physical and sexual violence, and many had never sought help. Although women victims of violence had access to complaint mechanisms, it was problematic that, if the complainant was a minor, her guardian would be involved in the process. How could girls file complaints independently of their guardians? With regard to protective custody, she asked whether there was any way in which article 3 of the Crime Prevention Act could be repealed and what measures were taken to ensure the reintegration of women from shelters into society.

44. **Ms. Rana** said that she would be grateful for more detailed responses to her questions on the provision of legal aid, in particular for victims of trafficking, the maximum length of stay in Government-operated shelters for victims and the mechanism for referring victims to such shelters.

45. **Ms. Nims** (Jordan) said that civil society organizations provided legal aid, which was available to everyone, regardless of nationality. Pursuant to article 100 of the Bar Association Law, legal services were available to both defendants and plaintiffs. The

Government planned to set up a fund within the Ministry of Justice to cover the cost of legal aid.

46. In December 2016, a by-law relating to the provision of shelters had been introduced. The Jordanian National Commission for Women intended to work with the Government and the Ministry of Social Development to make further progress on that front. She acknowledged that further measures should be taken to encourage women to come forward to report incidents of violence. Furthermore, if women were not economically empowered, they would not be able to escape the cycle of violence. Consideration was also being given to the introduction of measures to ensure that women victims of domestic violence could remain in their homes with their children. The statistics published by the Family Protection Department showed a large increase in the number of reported cases. While the increase was a cause for concern, it was nevertheless encouraging that more women were coming forward. The priority was now to increase the quality of the services provided for victims.

47. There was a national team for the prevention of domestic violence under the National Council on Family Affairs. Its membership included representatives from civil society organizations that worked with women directly. Efforts had been made to ensure the effective implementation of the National Framework for Family Protection against Violence, which had been updated in 2016, and to empower civil society. She acknowledged that further measures should be taken to improve the reintegration of women who had spent time in shelters. Such women had to be economically empowered, as they sometimes did not wish to return to their families.

48. **Mr. Tawalbeh** (Jordan) said that the term "honour crime" was misleading. It was more accurate to say that the crimes in question were committed under the pretext of protecting honour. Following recommendations adopted by the Government and recommendations made in the universal periodic review process, some legal texts had been amended to bring them into line with international obligations, and feminist groups had launched other initiatives. The situation on the ground was somewhat different. Following a workshop organized by the Jordanian National Commission for Women, the Iftaa Board of the General Iftaa Department had issued a fatwa condemning so-called honour crimes. Article 308 of the Penal Code was under discussion, and it was hoped that an amendment could be drafted for submission to the parliament. It was not in fact necessary for the guardian of a victim of violence who was a minor to report incidents on her behalf: victims were entitled to report any offences against them regardless of age.

49. **Ms. Nims** (Jordan) said that there had been 42 so-called honour crimes against women and girls. Some perpetrators attempted to argue that their acts did not constitute crimes. However, the alleged protection of honour was not accepted as a defence or mitigating circumstance in court. Consideration was currently being given to amending the provisions of the Penal Code that might suggest otherwise. Efforts were being made to provide for shelters for victims of violence across the country.

50. **Mr. Tawalbeh** (Jordan) said that persons accused of so-called honour crimes could not benefit from the mitigating circumstances specified in article 340 (1) of the Penal Code unless the conditions specified therein were met. Such persons were presumed innocent until proven guilty, but the alleged protection of honour could not be accepted as a mitigating circumstance. It was ultimately up to the court to decide whether to accept the arguments put forward by the defence.

51. **Ms. Gabr** said that the State party's report (CEDAW/C/JOR/6) included a reference to fatwa No. 2758 of the Iftaa Board of the General Iftaa Department, which stated that the marriage of a rapist to the person whom he raped was unacceptable in custom, sharia and civil law.

52. **Mr. Tawalbeh** (Jordan) said that the fatwa in question showed that acts of sexual violence and rape were condemned.

53. **Ms. Nims** (Jordan) said that such fatwas were influential, but they did not enjoy the status of civil law.

54. **Ms. Haidar** said that, while it was helpful if such fatwas supported positive change, they should not take precedence over civil law.

Articles 7 to 9

55. **Ms. Acosta Vargas** said that, while the recent increase in the proportion of parliamentary seats occupied by women represented a positive development, she nevertheless wished to know when full equality of representation would be achieved if the proportion of seats occupied by women continued to increase at the current rate. Could more not be done to increase their representation? She asked whether the quota set under the Decentralization Act represented an upper limit or whether it could be exceeded.

56. She asked whether the national coalition for the political involvement of women had made specific recommendations for increasing the political participation of women. While the 2012 Political Parties Act established that a political party could not be registered unless at least 10 per cent of its members were women, statistics showed that women's involvement in politics was already greater than was suggested by that percentage.

57. She wished to know whether an analysis of the fundamental causes of the low participation of women in politics had been conducted. While it had been pleasing to learn that many judges were women, more information on the involvement of women in religious courts would be helpful, as the Committee had been informed that the staff of such courts did not include any women, despite the fact that some experts in the application of sharia were women. In addition, the membership of the recently established 10-person judicial reform committee set up to enhance the rule of law included only one woman. She would be grateful if the delegation could comment further on the involvement of women in the judiciary in that regard.

58. The Committee had been informed that there were obstacles to the formation of women's organizations. It should be recalled that advances in women's rights depended on the work of such organizations. Lastly, she wished to know what would be done to increase the representation of women in chambers of commerce and industry.

59. **Ms. Chalal** said that the State party was to be commended for accommodating such a large number of Syrian refugees. While it had been helpful to learn why it had not been possible to implement some of the Committee's previous recommendations, she nevertheless wished to know whether progress had been made in terms of amending the Nationality Act to ensure equality between women and men with regard to the acquisition, change and retention of nationality and to enable Jordanian women to pass their nationality to their foreign spouses and their mutual children.

60. She would be grateful for more information on the implementation of the 2014 Cabinet decision pursuant to which the children of Jordanian women married to non-Jordanian men were granted privileges (*mazaya*), such as residence permits, improved access to State health-care facilities, education and work in the private sector, provided that they had resided in Jordan for at least five years. Had follow-up and evaluation mechanisms been introduced in that connection? Did those privileges represent a temporary special measure? Could a Jordanian woman who had renounced her citizenship on marrying a non-Jordanian man reacquire it at a later stage?

61. She asked whether, in line with a recommendation recently made by the Committee against Torture (CAT/C/JOR/CO/3), the State party had put an end to the arbitrary

revocation of citizenship or withdrawal of national identification numbers from Jordanians of Palestinian origin and whether there were plans to ratify the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Lastly, she wished to draw attention to the fact that her country, Algeria, had lifted its reservation to article 9 (2) of the Convention in 2000.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.